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OCI. No. 2356/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
23 September 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Presidential Statements on US Photographic  
Reconnaissance over Cuba

1. The President has frequently mentioned US surveillance of Cuba in public statements since last October's crisis. Most of these statements were in response to questions asked during news conferences, although several other public addresses and a few White House releases have also contained references to US reconnaissance over Cuba.

2. On several occasions the President stated that photographic reconnaissance of Cuba was continuing on a daily basis. He has not, however, specifically indicated when or under what conditions surveillance might be curtailed or canceled altogether. Furthermore, nearly all of his statements on aerial reconnaissance were very general and made no reference to the advantages or disadvantages of daily, as opposed to less frequent, photographic reconnaissance of Cuba.

3. The President has mentioned several reasons for continuing aerial surveillance which bear upon the question of how long it may be continued. During October and November he indicated that aerial surveillance would continue until satisfactory methods to verify the removal of offensive weapons had been initiated or until we believe Cuba no longer posed a serious threat to peace in the Western Hemisphere. Following the withdrawal of offensive weapons, the President said that daily surveillance continued because, "given the history of last fall, where deception was used" and offensive weapons introduced into Cuba, we cannot "trust to words" and must "expect the worst." The President's

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statements during the first few months of 1963 when Soviet military personnel were leaving Cuba indicated that surveillance would continue until all Soviet troops left the island.

4. Since April there have been no direct references by the President to aerial reconnaissance over Cuba, although comments on the status of Soviet forces remaining there have indicated that surveillance continued.

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ANNEX

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Some of President Kennedy's  
Public Statements on  
US Surveillance of Cuba

1. The President's Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Soviet Arms Buildup in Cuba, 22 October 1962:

As one of the initial steps to be taken to defend the security of the Western Hemisphere, the President said: "I have directed the continued and increased close surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup."

2. Radio and Television Remarks by President Kennedy on the Dismantling of Soviet Missile Bases in Cuba, 2 November 1962:

"The United States intends to follow closely the completion of this work (dismantling of Soviet missile bases in Cuba) through a variety of means, including aerial surveillance, until such time as an equally satisfactory international means of verification is effected. The continuation of these measures in air and sea, until the threat to peace posed by these offensive weapons is gone, is in keeping with our pledge to secure their withdrawal...."

3. News Conference, 20 November 1962:

After review of offensive weapons withdrawals, the President said "important parts of the understanding of October 27th and 28th remain to be carried out. The Cuban Government has not yet permitted the United Nations to verify whether all offensive weapons have been removed, and no lasting safeguards have yet been established against the future introduction of offensive weapons back into Cuba."

"Consequently, if the Western Hemisphere is to continue to protect against offensive weapons, this Government has no choice but to pursue its own means of checking on military activities in Cuba. The importance of our continued vigilance is underlined by our identification in recent days of a number of Soviet ground combat units in Cuba...."

In answer to a question of what we would accept as a guarantee, against the reintroduction of

missiles short of continuous aerial reconnaissance the President said: "I think that what we would like to have is the kind of inspection on the ground which would make any other means of obtaining information unnecessary. Inspection which would provide us with assurances" that there are no offensive weapons on the island. "If we do not achieve that goal, then we have to use other resources to assure ourselves that weapons are not there, or that they're not being reintroduced."

4. News Conference, 12 December 1962:

In answer to a question about a speech by Khrushchev, President Kennedy indicated that until some decision or agreement was reached with the USSR regarding the questions of offensive weapons and inspection, "we would take every step that is necessary to make sure that these missiles are not reintroduced into Cuba or that offensive weapons are not reintroduced. And we are taking those means daily."

In answer to a question about offensive weapons in Cuba, the President said that the offensive weapons have apparently been removed; however, "these things are never 100 percent, and it is for that reason that we are insisting on verification, or if we cannot get the kind of international inspection we will continue to use our own method of verification, which we believe gives us assurance against a reintroduction of these weapons into Cuba. And I think that the methods we are using to determine the status of military activity in Cuba are very effective, and are being used frequently."

5. Address and Question-and-Answer Period at the Economic Club of New York, 14 December 1962:

In answer to a question on getting the Russians out of Cuba, the President said that Khrushchev had stated he would withdraw other elements than the offensive weapons but had not put a time limit on this. This guarantee is less precise "so this must be a matter of continuing concern, and is the reason why we are maintaining observation and verification by our own means daily, and why we will continue to do so. And while the matter of Cuba, therefore, still remains unsettled, as long

as it is a Soviet military base, it of course represents a threat to peace in the Caribbean."

6. Television Interview, "After Two Years-- a Conversation with the President," 17 December 1962:

In answer to a question about on-site inspection and whether it will work in Cuba or elsewhere, the President said: "No, the camera I think is actually going to be our best inspector."

7. News Conference, 24 January 1963:

To a question on alleged military buildup in Cuba, President Kennedy answered that "we have been conducting continued surveillance" and there is no indication of a buildup.

8. News Conference, 7 February 1963:

Presidential response to a question as to whether or not we are sure there are no offensive weapons in Cuba: "Nobody can prove, in the finite sense, that they (missiles) are not there, or they might be brought in. But they (missiles) are going to have to be erected, and we continue complete surveillance. They have to be moved. They have to be put onto pads. They have to be prepared to fire."

In answer to a question on his position concerning on-site inspection the President said: "I don't expect Cuba will agree to the kind of on-site inspection that would give us more assurances than we have at the present time through photography."

To a question on what we would do if photographic reconnaissance were forbidden by Cuba and taken to UN, the President replied that photography "is a substitute (for ground on-site inspection), in a sense, for the kind of on-site inspection which we hope to get...." The United States cannot, given the history of the last fall, where deception was used against us, we could not be expected to merely trust to words in regard to a potential buildup, so we may have to face the situation, but if we do, we will face it."

On a question regarding the possibility of using defensive weapons offensively and reintroducing missiles, the President said: "It is possible--it is possible--everything is possible. After our experience last fall, we operate on the assumption that we are hoping for the best, we expect the worst. That is why we continue our daily surveillance."

"We cannot prove that there is not a missile in a cave or that the Soviet Union isn't going to ship next week. We prepare for that. But we will find them when they do, and when they do, the Soviet Union and Cuba and the United States must all be aware that this will produce the greatest crisis which the world has faced in its history."

8. News Conference, 24 April 1963:

In answer to a question concerning the administration's attitude toward Cuba the President said: "We have made it very clear that we would not permit the movement of troops from Cuba to another country for offensive purposes. We maintain surveillance. We do a good many things."